

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2022

Statement on Senate Passage of Legislation To Expand Health Care and Disability Benefits for Veterans Impacted by Toxic Environmental Exposures

June 16, 2022

As part of the unity agenda that I laid out in my State of the Union Address, I called on Congress to make sure that veterans and their families and caregivers impacted by toxic exposures finally get the benefits and comprehensive health care they earned and deserve. Today the United States Senate answered that call by overwhelmingly passing the bipartisan Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our PACT Act of 2022, the largest single bill in American history to address our servicemembers' exposure to burn pits and other toxic substances.

This bill will provide expanded access to health care and disability benefits for veterans harmed by certain toxic exposures, whether in the jungles of Vietnam or the mountains of Afghanistan. It will also let the Department of Veterans Affairs move more quickly and comprehensively in the future to determine if illnesses are related to military service, and it will offer critical support to survivors who were harmed by exposures, including from water contamination at Camp Lejeune. Importantly, the bill includes the tools and resources to ensure that the VA can effectively implement it.

Above all, this legislation makes good on our sacred obligation to care for veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors. I want to thank Chair Tester and Ranking Member Moran for their remarkable work to pass the PACT Act, and I urge the House to swiftly pass this bill so I can sign it into law right away.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 3967; and Sens. Jon R. Tester and Gerald W. Moran, in their respective capacities and chair and ranking member of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Categories: Statements by the President : Veteran impacted by toxic environmental exposures, legislation expanding health care and disability benefits, Senate passage.

Names: Moran, Gerald W.; Tester, Jon R.

Subjects: Armed Forces, U.S : Servicemembers :: Environmental exposures in war zones; Armed Forces, U.S. : Servicemembers :: Deployment; Congress : Bipartisanship; Legislation, proposed : Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our PACT Act of 2022; Veterans : Benefits; Veterans : Health and medical care.

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